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Paul returns \$72K to Treasury for '98 *Hard-line stance on cutting costs applies to own office*

WASHINGTON, DC -- Proving himself yet again to be one of Washington's fiercest spending hawks, US Rep. Ron Paul (R-Texas) will be returning more than \$72,500 of his 1998 budget to the US Treasury. That equals almost eight percent of his office budget. "I think there would be a lot of happy people if the federal government could cut its operational costs by 8% this year, and give every single American taxpayer an immediate, across-the-board 8% tax cut," said Rep. Paul. Under congressional budget rules, Paul received \$919,633 for 1998 to pay staff, office expenses, travel, telephone bills, mail and computer equipment. While some Members actually over-spend their allotment, Rep. Paul returned the unused monies to the Treasury. "I've said for a long time that the federal government needs to go on a diet, and my office is one of the leanest in Congress," said Rep. Paul. That same dedication to responsible use of taxpayer funds is found in the office's commitment to top-rate constituent service. "Last year we heard many positive comments about our constituent services; I'm pleased we've been able to help the people of South and Central Texas while at the same time reducing costs." While politicians' rhetoric pays lip service to the need to cut the size of government, little gets done as the spending increases. "A good place to start curbing the cost of government is right here in Congress; not only cutting back on offices expenses, but also cutting the salary Members receive and, most importantly, ending the congressional pension plan." Rep. Paul refuses to participate in the congressional pension. He said the secret to keeping costs down is simple: no frills. Rep. Paul's offices use standard, government issue, used furniture and bare-essential computers and other equipment. He also has a smaller Washington, DC, staff, than most congressmen. "What Congress needs to realize is that the nearly \$1 million budget we each get is not our money, but the taxpayers' money; we have a sacred obligation to spend as little as possible, using every penny wisely. Of course, if Congress followed the Constitution, the federal government in general and Congress in specific would be spending a lot less money."

